Andrew Jackson to Willie Blount, June 17, 1812, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO WILLIE BLOUNT.1

1 This letter shows how completely Jackson was then absorbed in preparations for war against the Indians. It was June 12 when Congress declared war and the news could not have reached Nashville by that time. June 25 Jackson, through Governor Blount, offered to the President his own services and those of 2500 volunteers. The reply of the secretary of war, received by Blount July 21, was very appreciative of Tennessee patriotism.

Nashville, June 17, 1812.

Dear Sir . I have the honor to acknowledge the recpt of your two letters of date 12th. instant, which is Just to hand, and I am favoured with the perusal of your letter to Major John Coffee of the 6th. instant all of which I have carefully perused, and their contents duly noted. I heartily concur with you in your ideas with respect, to the little confidence that ought to be placed in the aid or friendship of Indians.2 but I do think

2 Governor Blount had said he had no faith in any Indians and no confidence in the recent offer of the Cherokee to maintain peaceful relations.

that policy will dictate the propriety of inlisting one nation against another. If they will go to war, those that are not for us must be against us. if the[y] will attempt to deceive by part of a nation holding out the olive branch whilst the others are scalping us, let us make the aparent friends, Join in punishing the hostile part. If we get the Cherokees, engaged with the Creeks, they will be obliged to be friendly with us to preserve themselfs. I believe self interest and self preservation the most predominant passion. fear is better than love

with an indian. Therefore the policy to enlist Lowry, Walker and the Ridge in our service, and make them furnish a sufficient number for pilots, to the Creek towns, and manage the ballance so as to deceive the Creeks, by giving them orders to march always at a distant period, when troops would at that time be actually in the creek towns for I am of the oppinion that either the Cherokees or chickasaws would advise the Creeks of any campaign against them if the[y] knew it.

I am happy to find that a supply of arms and equipments can be had, and immediately on the recpt of your orders for the arms and equipments, I shall send Mr Eli Hammond for them across by land, to get them put into some of our merchants Boats who are loaded for this place three are shortly expected from Pittsburg to pass Newport, on their way thither. Mr Hammond is a man in whom the utmost confidence can be placed and well acquainted with boating.

Rest assured I have the militia in a state of readiness that I could in three days move with 2500 volunteers against the creeks, and I shall have (where there is not already) one company of mounted infantry as you recommend in each R[e]giment. Should the report of Mrs Williams and her child being murdered be true, it proves fully the combination of all the nations to the south with the phrophet.3 as soon as I can get the arms from Newport, I will be ready, and the spirit of the times here says speedy vengeance will await the friends of the phrophet, for let Colo. Hawkins4 say what he will the truth is the great body of the creeks are for war, and it is almost impossible that he Colo Hawkins could have wrote on the 18th of May, and that reached north Carolina, and there published in the Raleigh paper and in Nashville on the 12th of June. Mr Luster did state to Capt Strothert and myself on the night of the 24th. of May, that on the 22nd. he saw the Colo. and his family in milledgeville and that he had moved his family owing to the hostile attitude of the creek nation we had the same report from other channels. I see and note from your letter to major Coffee, the extent of your power. Indeed I knew, that by the laws of the state you had no other power but

3 The Prophet was the brother of Tecumseh. Together they planned a general confederation of Indians in the West and Southwest to stay the advance of the whites into the Indian country.

4 Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, a member of the Continental Congress, and, from 1790 to 1795, a senator from North Carolina. In 1797 he was appointed "Superintendent of all Indians South of the Ohio". He moved to the heart of the Creek country and established himself on the Ocmulgee River in Georgia at a place which took the name Fort Hawkins, now called Hawkinsville. In 1812 he was merely agent with Creeks. He built mills and introduced manufactures and sought to develop the civilization of the Indians. He had great influence with them and was not sympathetic with the average frontiersman's attitude on that subject.

to order out men to repell invasion etc etc—that you could only make defencive war but I did expect that the President seeing the situation of the north western frontier would have given you full and ample power, to have defended your frontier in every way necessary and proper, and not to have waited untill a blow was struct, and then give you orders to apply a remedy. This is sending for a Phi[si]cian after the patient is dead. rest assured that my malitia are ready and will act promptly and eficiently when ordered.

I hope to be able to have compleat returns to you, under your two last orders in a verry short time. I wrote for some explanation to the adjutant GenI by last fridays mail, which I hope to receive by next friday; the different GenIs, are acting in anticipation of my order having seen yours and will have their respective quotas in ten days from the time they receive my order. I can only make the apportionment by Brigades. The law does not require the Brigade Major to make a return to me of the strength and condition of their Brigades, I have no data to Judge of their respective strength, and can only divide the men wanted equally between the five Brigades.

Library of Congress
I am advised that Capt Masons Company is not yet in the field, but will march on Saturday. With assurances of respect and Esteem I am yr mo. ob. serv.